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NEWSPAPER OBITUARIES.

By a JOURNALIST.

A LARGE portion of my yearly income is earned by the writing of newspaper obituaries. As a journalist I have made that sort of work a specialty, and I find it pays excellently well. You may imagine it is a rather gruesome occupation; that it reminds one too forcibly of 'graves and worms and epitaphs;' and that, like the undertaker's mate, I must be a person of sad and solemn visage. But if you think so, you are much mistaken. My occupation has no depressing effect whatever on my countenance; and at the social gatherings of the London Press Club, up Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, my laugh rings the loudest and the merriest. And I cannot see why it should be otherwise. As an obituary writer, I live and move and have my being in the companionship of great men and women of all classes—poets, artists, statesmen, politicians, soldiers, scientists, and *littérateurs*. I trace their careers; I record their achievements; I note their influence on their time. What other effect could such employment have on the character of a man but to strengthen, enlarge, and ennoble it?

You must not suppose that the obituary is written in the newspaper office when the news of the death of some public personage arrives. All the big daily papers have obituaries of every man and woman of distinction who are advanced in years pigeon-holed, or 'in pickle,' as the phrase goes in journalistic circles. Some of these obituaries are brief; others extend to three or four or five columns, according to the relative importance of the subject; but they are all at the editor's hand, ready for publication at any moment, and he is thus enabled to give a sketch, columns long, of the career of a public man, a few hours, in some instances, after that career has closed for ever.

Of course, it happens now and then that

the newspapers are caught napping. A young public man, who would seem in the natural course of things to have a long lease of life, is suddenly and unexpectedly cut down by death, and there is no obituary ready for publication. In such a case, which fortunately is very rare, the best that is possible in the circumstances is done with the aid of a biographical dictionary, like *Men of the Time* and other books of reference. But an obituary turned out under such difficulties is, as a rule, little more than a string of dates.

The sudden death of Mr Parnell, for instance, was an event for which the newspapers were entirely unprepared. This was all the more vexatious, from the editor's point of view, as the leader of the Irish Nationalists was at the time one of the most prominent and interesting personages on the public stage of this kingdom, and columns of excellent 'copy' could have been made out of the events of his varied and exciting career, if only time had been given to prepare it. As it was, the obituaries of Mr Parnell were, with a few exceptions, dull and meagre, and entirely unworthy both of the subject and of the Press.

The average newspaper reader will read with greater interest and more at length the obituary of a public man who is suddenly cut off, than the obituary of one who has had a long illness, and for whose death the public are prepared. But of course it is of the latter that the best obituary is published. When a public man becomes seriously ill, his obituary is taken from the pigeon-hole, carefully gone over, freshened and brightened and brought up to date by the addition of the more recent events of his career. Of that phase of journalism we have had some illustrations within the past few years in the excellent obituaries which were published of Lord Tennyson, Professor Tyndall, Dr Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Mr J. A. Froude, all of whom had a long struggle with death before they finally succumbed.

There are many obituaries pigeon-holed in

newspaper offices the writers of which will never see them in print, for they themselves have died before the subjects of their biographical essays. A curious instance of this is afforded by the case of the *Times* obituary of Earl Russell (better known as 'Lord John Russell'), who died in 1878 at the ripe old age of eighty-six years, sixty-five of which were spent in public life. The obituary was written twenty years before the Earl's death. It was added to as time went on; but—strange fatality!—every one of its contributors died before the subject himself. In the end, notwithstanding the general freedom from superstition of journalists, no one could be got to touch the biography until the time came for its publication.

To take another instance. There is not a daily newspaper in the kingdom that has not had in readiness for years an obituary of Mr Gladstone. Twenty years ago, in 1875, the aged statesman wrote to Lord Granville resigning the leadership of the Liberal party, as, he said, he was too old for public affairs, and it was time for him to turn his thoughts to the other world. But, as every one knows, he came back to public life after a few years of retirement, and since then has made more history than in the previous forty years of his public career. When he goes, what excitement and confusion the event will create in the newspaper offices of the kingdom! Mr J. M. Barrie, in his entertaining story of newspaper life, *When a Man's Single*, tells us that the foreman printer and the sub-editor of the *Silchester Daily Mirror* often talked with bated breath of the amount of copy that would come in should anything happen to Mr Gladstone. 'The sub-editor, if he was in a despondent mood, predicted,' writes Mr Barrie facetiously, 'that it would occur at midnight. Thinking of this had made him a Conservative.'

Such an event occurring late at night would completely upset the internal economy of every newspaper office in the country. At midnight, the next morning's paper is practically all in type; and should the prophecy which the sub-editor of the *Mirror* indulged in when in a despondent mood come true, from five to ten columns of the matter in type would have to be discarded from the account of Mr Gladstone's long and eminent career.

The dangerous illness of the Prince of Wales, in December 1871, was the cause of events—curious and amusing—which will ever find a place in the history of British journalism. The death of the Prince seemed inevitable; for the doctors had begun to despair. One day the announcement went forth that His Royal Highness could not survive many hours, and accordingly every daily newspaper in the kingdom had its obituary of the Prince 'set,' or put into type. But the expected telegram announcing the death never came, and so at midnight, when the hour for going to press was close at hand, many a newspaper editor who had relied on his biographical sketch of the Prince filling six or eight columns of his paper, was compelled to fill up the blank columns with 'standing' matter of all kinds, such as old advertisements and older news. The principal newspaper editors subsequently sent the Prince, at his own request,

'proofs' of the obituaries; and pasted in a bulky scrap-book, they now form one of the strangest and most curious objects to be seen at Marlborough House.

The eccentric Lord Brougham also had the unique experience of being able to read his own obituaries in the newspapers. He was said to have circulated the report of his death in order to see how he would be referred to in the Press; and as many unpleasant things were written of his erratic political career, he could, in that case, hardly have enjoyed the outcome of the experiment. 'I wonder what the *Times* will say of me?' Lord Elgin—who brought the celebrated sculptures known as 'the Elgin Marbles' from Athens early in the century—was heard to murmur to himself on his death-bed in 1841; but his curiosity was not satisfied.

Robert Louis Stevenson had, like the Prince of Wales, the pleasure—the melancholy pleasure, perhaps—of reading before his death the good things the Press would write of him when he was no more. 'It has been a source of interest and amusement to me in this island home,' he once said to a visitor to Samoa, 'to read from time to time my obituary notices. The news travels so far before it can be contradicted, that it often becomes exciting. However, the climate is so admirable, that instead of furnishing the journals with interesting matter for paragraphs, I am likely to supply my editors with copy for a considerable time to come.' When the news reached this country in December of 1894 that the great novelist was dead, it was believed and hoped by many to be an unfounded rumour, and that once again Mr Stevenson would be able to read his obituary notices. But, alas! the announcement was only too true.

A still rarer experience is for one to write one's own obituary for a newspaper. Miss Harriet Martineau, the celebrated author, who was for many years a leader-writer on the staff of the *Daily News*, actually wrote the obituary which appeared in the issue of that journal for June 29, 1876, two days after her death. A more excellent or impartial review of her career could hardly have been produced. She says she had 'small imaginative and suggestive powers, and therefore no approach to genius'; and that 'she could popularise, though she could neither discover nor invent.' This remarkable obituary, which fills three and a half columns of the *Daily News*, was published precisely as it was written in 1855, when the author and the subject of it felt that her end was at hand. But she lived for twenty-one years after, during which the obituary notice lay in a pigeon-hole in the *Daily News* office.

But probably the most extraordinary circumstances in connection with this subject were two recent libel actions against London evening papers for statements contained in obituaries. In one case a man fell from a train in motion on a Welsh railway and was killed. There was nothing on his person to lead to his identification; but as some sketch-books belonging to an artist connected with a London weekly illustrated paper were found in an empty carriage of the train, it was presumed the dead man was the artist, and a telegram

to that effect was sent, in the ordinary course, to the London newspapers.

One of the evening journals published a sketch of the artist's life, in which it was said that if the deceased had only had more application and steadiness he would have attained a far higher position in illustrated journalism. But the artist was not dead at all; he had simply forgotten his paraphernalia in the railway carriage, and on returning to London, brought an action against the evening paper for libel, which he alleged was contained in its comments in the obituary notice. The action was settled out of Court by the payment of substantial damages.

In the other and more recent case, the person who complained of being slandered in an obituary was a music-hall artist. The notice of his death was complimentary to him as a singer, but it insinuated that he was an agent of the Irish-American dynamitards, and as such, frequently travelled between London, New York, and Paris. The newspaper in question got the news from an outside contributor—it was sent, probably, as a stupid or malicious practical joke; but the music-hall artist was handsomely compensated for its publication.

The obituary writer must be a diligent and omnivorous reader of newspapers and magazines and of current literature; and when he reads, he must always have beside him pencil and note-book, scissors, paste, and scrap-book. Thanks to my own extensive scrap-books and note-books, which I have indexed on a most elaborate scale, I can turn out at a few hours' notice a biographical sketch, from three to six columns long, of any of the thirty or forty leading men and women of the day in politics, literature, art, or science. It is only by such a system that full and accurate obituaries can be written. The public careers of these distinguished personages are recorded from day to day, from week to week, in the newspapers, and from month to month in the magazines, while occasionally, glimpses behind the scenes in their private lives are afforded by the autobiographies and reminiscences of contemporaries, which form a not insignificant part of current literature; and one needs to be very alert, and very laborious in the use of pencil and scissors and paste-brush, to keep note-books and scrap-books fully up to date.

Occasionally, men and women spring suddenly into fame. I may mention as recent instances Mr Crockett and Mr John Davidson in literature; Mrs Patrick Campbell on the stage; and Mr Asquith in politics. In some of these cases it is not easy to trace the career of a man up to the point at which he achieved renown, and his movements and doings became of interest to the general public. I have, therefore, often written to a man for necessary information which I could obtain from no other source, telling him, of course, I needed it for a biographical sketch, but refraining from mentioning the melancholy occasion on which that sketch would be published; and, as a rule, I have always attained the desired object.

In one instance, however—the case of a man who is still alive, and holds a very warm

corner in the hearts of millions of the people of these islands—I inadvertently mentioned the object for which I wanted the information I asked for, and as my letter reached him on his birthday, of all days of the year, I am afraid it was a most unseasonable and perhaps a most unwelcome communication. Nevertheless, it evoked the following genial reply:

'DEAR SIR—You acted the part of the skeleton at the feast in my household this morning, and acted it, I must say, in a becomingly gruesome fashion. At the breakfast table, while I was happily receiving the congratulations of my family on my seventy-sixth birthday—for I was born three-quarters of a century ago to-day—I opened your letter; and when I read of the purpose for which you require the information you asked for, truly the subsequent proceedings interested me no more. A moment after I was told I looked as if I might live for ever, comes your reminder that the newspapers are making preparations for my death! Well, now, wasn't that provoking! However, I'll forgive your untimely intrusion if you promise not to be too hard on me in your sketch of my career. I only hope that the newspapers circulate in Paradise, in order that I may read there what you have got to say of me.'

He gave me the information I desired; and in a letter of apology and thanks I sent him, I told him of the profound conviction which prevails in journalistic circles that the best guarantee of a long life is to have one's obituary pigeon-holed in a newspaper office, of which there are two remarkable illustrations in the cases of Earl Russell and Harriet Martineau.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER V. (continued).

'I'm glad I spoke out about that, Ren,' said Brant, placing his foot upon a chair, resting his arm upon his knee, and speaking in a low, thoughtful manner. 'I must make more of a push of it now over the business, and insist upon taking my place there. I'm afraid I've been a bit careless.'

Rénée looked at him wistfully.

'Yes,' he said; 'that has been it, Ren. The old man made it too easy for me, and a young fellow likes a bit of pleasure: races and all that sort of thing.'

'It has troubled Papa a great deal, Brant,' said Renée.

'S'pose so. But half of it was his fault; and it wasn't pleasant for us to have rows about it. Dear old boy; he's a good fellow, and we can't have him knocking up from too much work.'

'No, Brant, and it troubles me greatly.'

'Of course it does. I haven't noticed it so much till lately. Then the change came upon me all at once, and I felt startled.'

'Brant!'

'There, there; don't take it like that. Noth-

ing the matter but that he is fagged out, poor old boy.* But there; I'll—we, I mean—we'll soon put that right: you work at home, I at the office.'

'Thank you, Brant, dear; we will indeed.'

'He won't like it at first; but he'll soon get used to it. So hard, you know, to alter a man's habits.'

'But, Brant, speak frankly to me. Dr Kilpatrick never will.'

'Of course he won't—doctors are such humbugs. They pretend things are worse than they are, and play mystery and hocus-pocus to make you think they are wonderfully clever when the patient gets well. No; there's nothing radically wrong with him, only fagged out. Worries too much. More he makes, the more he wants to make; and money doesn't mean happiness, Ren.'

'No, Brant.'

'It's very well, of course; but you want something else, or it's of no use.—Well, there; I must be off directly. I shall go straight back to the office, and there's going to be a bit of rebellion. I don't care what he says; I shall stick to the work and relieve him all I can.'

'Thank you, Brant. I know you will.'

'Yes. There's no nonsense about it now, Ren—I mean work, and to hold my own at the office; he must make me a junior partner.'

Rénée shook her head. 'I'm afraid he would not yet.'

'He must, dear. It is necessary for my position. Hang the money! I don't want that. I can get on with what I have now; but if a fellow is to command, he must have his commission. I'm only a sort of clerk, and there must be some change made.'

Rénée shook her head; she was too much in her father's confidence not to know a good deal about her cousin's career in Great George Street.

'Don't do that, my dear,' he said quietly.

'You must work with me for his sake. Ren, I'm four-and-twenty next year; I know all the flam of a fashionable man's life. It won't do. A fellow wants something more solid. Thank goodness, my life's mapped out, and Robert Dalton & Co. shan't stand still, I promise you. I mean to make you all proud of me and of what I do. He's a fine old fellow, and he has done a deal for me; and I'll let him see that I've got some of the right stuff in me after all.'

'Thank you, Brant,' cried Renée, placing her hands in his. 'You don't know how happy you have made me,' she cried, the husky tone of his voice impressing her. 'I always told Papa that you would see through your folly soon, and be to us the good loving boy again that you were when you first came.'

'Thank you, too, dear,' he cried warmly, as he held her hands, but turned away his head a little. 'I say, don't think me a soft.'

'I am only too glad to see you moved, Brant, dear.'

'Are you, Ren? And you will help me in my plans?'

'Of course, dear; and if they result in weaning Papa from so much weary toil and restore him to his health, I shall be happy indeed.'

'Then you shall be happy, Ren,' he said earnestly.—'Now, listen: I must be a partner for the sake of the position. You'll help me in that, too, for all our sakes?'

'Of course I will, dear.'

'Mind, it is for his sake. But once done, the rest will follow.'

'Yes, I see,' said Renée.

'And you do believe in me now?'

'Yes, indeed I do,' she said, looking him full in his eyes.

'Thank you, dear,' he cried, folding her in his arms and kissing her warmly as he took her quite by surprise. 'We must make him consent to an early marriage, and—'

'Brant!' she exclaimed wildly as she wrested herself free, and gazed at him wide-eyed, cheek flaming, and astonished.

'Why, what's the matter, dear?' he said, trying to catch her to his breast again.

'Don't!'

Only that one word, but accompanied by a look full of indignation.

'Why, you silly little thing!' he said, laughing. 'Woman's nature. You love me, and promise me everything I could wish for, and then look flashes of lightning at me for trying to steal a kiss. What a naughty little cousin!'

'Brant!' she cried excitedly, 'you misunderstand me.'

'Oh, no; I don't, pussy. If there is any one I understand, it is you.—But there, so long as we understand each other, that will do. You know I love you, and have for these two years past, as a man loves the first woman who ever made his heart beat fast. I can wait. We have others to think of now more than of ourselves. We must study him, Ren, dear.'

'Brant,' she cried in horror at his quiet assumption of a right to speak as he did, 'are you mad?'

'Very nearly, dear—with joy. My darling cousin has shown me the secret of her dear little heart, and I know she loves me.'

'Oh yes,' she cried wildly. 'Cousin Brant, if I made you think I loved you, it was as my cousin—as my brother.'

'What!' he cried, laughing. 'Nonsense, Ren, dear. You don't know yourself yet. There; I love you all the better for your sweet girlish innocence.'

'No, no, Brant; don't—don't talk like that,' she cried wildly.

'Why, what has come to you, darling?' he said tenderly, as she turned hysterical.

'Don't—don't touch me,' she cried, almost fiercely. 'It is all a dreadful misunderstanding.'

'Is it?' he cried, with a hard look in his eyes, and his whole manner changing. 'I'll show you that it is not. You can't draw back now, Ren, for a girlish whim. Recollect, it is for poor uncle's sake, as well as our happiness.—Why, what do you mean? One minute you are all loving and kind; the next, ready to make me think— But there, nonsense! I know I startled you. I'll wait for a bit, and you'll soon think differently. Misunderstanding? Oh no, Ren, dear, there is no misunderstanding now. I take it that you have promised to be my little wife.'

'Brant,' she said, growing perfectly calm now, and speaking with quiet womanly dignity, 'listen to me.'

'Listen to you? Yes, I like to,' he said playfully.

'Oh, don't speak to me like that, Brant,' she said, losing her firmness for a moment.

'I can't guide my tongue when I speak to you, Ren—dear,' he said.

'Listen to me: you are purposely trifling.'

'No: serious as a judge,' he replied.

'Brant, stop this mocking way. You shall listen to me seriously. We were children together, and to me you have always seemed like a brother.'

'Nonsense!' he said sharply, and with the blood now beginning to tingle in his cheeks. 'I have always thought of you as my little wife. I told uncle I meant to marry you over a year ago, and again this morning.'

'Oh, no, no, no,' she cried excitedly.

'Don't be so silly, Ren. We are man and woman now, bound together to help him, perhaps to save his life.'

'Bound to help my dear father,' she cried, 'but not like that.'

There was such a look of horror in her eyes that he began to lose patience, but he mastered his rising temper, and said firmly: 'Yes: bound like that—for his sake.'

'But it is impossible,' she cried; 'never speak to me again like this.'

'What?' he cried, with his temper getting the upper hand for the moment; but he was master of himself again directly, and laughed unpleasantly. 'What an absurd girl you are! There; all right: hold me off a bit. I know.'

'Oh Brant,' she cried in so piteous a tone that he was startled, and gazed at her fiercely. 'You do not know.'

'What?' he cried. 'You mean— No: it isn't that,' he said in a low menacing tone. 'It couldn't be. Ren, I'm a man now—a man of strong feeling. I love you, and you are going to be my wife. Soon, too, for many reasons; so be sensible and wise, dear. Why, if it had been that which I thought, instead of a bit of coquetry on your part, I'd— Yes, I'd kill him.'

'Brant!'

'As I would some dog that had bitten me.'

She looked at him with the pupils of her eyes dilating, and the rage with which he had battled hard had its way.

'Then it is,' he cried, catching her wrist. 'I suspected it; but I wouldn't believe it of you. What has he dared to say?'

She wrested her hand away, and looked at him defiantly.

'Yes,' he continued, 'I'd shoot him like a dog. And as for you— There; pish! you make me angry, dear. I couldn't help it. That's impossible. I won't say what I was going to— Yes; I will. Look here, then. You are only a girl, so let me tell you that it is dangerous to trifle with a strong man's love. If such a thing were possible—that you had listened to another, sooner than he should rob me of you—of one whom I have always looked upon as my wife—I'd—kill you.'

Brant seemed another man. His words came

in a savage whisper, which, in spite of her indignation, made Renée shrink from him in horror, and for the moment, trembling. But in a short time she had recovered herself and spoke up bravely.

'You have no right to talk to me like that, Brant,' she cried. 'It is cruel and insulting.'

'Then there is something,' he said.

She made no reply, but looked in his eyes defiantly—the girl no longer, a strong woman now.

'Then that insolent pauper—that miserable time-serving sneak, Wynyan, has spoken to you. I suspected him. The hound! Mr Paul Wynyan, eh?'

She looked at him scornfully, but she was very white.

'Right! You don't deny it,' he continued.

'Not the first clerk who has made love to his master's daughter.'

'Brant, you have said enough.' She spoke quietly now. 'Pray, go, before you say words which must cause a cruel estrangement between us.'

'How sentimentally romantic we are! Cause an estrangement between us? Oh, do not think it, fairest cousin. So I'm to be honoured by having the proud young porter—I mean engineer, for a relative. Is it really he?—You are silent. Better tell me, so that I shall not make any mistake. It would be so sad if I did him a mischief, and he proved to be the wrong man.—Not a word? Then I suppose I am correct. Now, listen to me. I mean to be uncle's partner, and your husband; so I shall just go straight back to the office and thrash Wynyan till he cannot stand, and then bring the dog into uncle's room, and make him confess that he has taken advantage of his position of trust to address his master's daughter, and— Here, what are you going to do?' he cried as she darted to and rang the bell.

'Send for some one to protect me from your violence and insult, sir.'

'Then you set me at defiance?'

'Yes.'

'You throw over your poor suffering father.'

'Did you ring, ma'am?'

'Ask Miss Bryne to come here.'

The man withdrew.

'War, is it, then?' cried Brant, striding to the table and snatching the flowers he had brought from where they stood, and raising them to dash them down upon the carpet, only checking the impulse.

'No, no; I won't do that,' he said with a mocking laugh. 'It would be a pity. Get some wire, dear, and make them into a wreath to send to our dear Paul when I have had my interview with him. Don't make a mistake, Ren; I mean what I say, and'— He paused as he reached the door. 'Recollect, you are going to be my wife.'

He strode out of the house, and had hard work to check himself in a mad desire to give a slashing stroke at the neck of a marble statue on the landing, and then from banging the door.

He grew calmer, though, as he reached the street with a grim kind of calmness, and he

said to himself: 'That settles it. Fate had nothing else. It would have given me time, and I could have borrowed then of anybody. Well, all right. I wanted to be an honest man. Never mind; there's little Bella Endoza after all.'

CHAPTER VI.—A POOR CONSOLER.

That spray producer took so long in finding. 'Poor fellow!' said Miss Bryne, smiling in a late twilight fashion. 'I could see it in his eye. He has been very naughty, I'm afraid; but if he loves her, and is a good boy now, why should it not be so? I don't think dear Renée loves him; but she has grieved a great deal about him when Robert has been put out; and though they are cousins, he might make her very happy; and it would be so sad for either of them to suffer a disappointment in early youth, as some one did whom I once knew.'

Miss Bryne sighed, and looked in the glass at her pleasant, amiable, but decidedly *passé* aspect, and mused upon the past.

'It is a terrible thing this love, and I fear me that it produces more pain than pleasure in the world. But dearest Renée would make any man happy and good if he could win her. —Lilies! How suitable a present for her. Scent only—memories of the dead flowers—for poor me. Heigh-ho! never mind; I will not murmur. It might have been, had he lived; and now—who knows what may be.'

Miss Bryne stood with her brow wrinkled, looking very dreamy for a time. Then the smile came faintly upon her lip again.

'I think I'll leave them together a little longer. No: perhaps I ought not to. I'll go down now.' At that moment a sound which came in through the open window made her start. 'Why, he has gone!' she said in surprise; and then in a hurried manner she descended to the drawing-room, where Renée stood trembling and agitated, face to face with a something which had crept into her breast, and of whose presence she had not been fully aware till her cousin rudely dragged the veil aside.

Miss Bryne entered softly and quickly. 'I really cannot find the spray producer anywhere, my dear.' Then archly: 'I hope you did not think me long?'

At these words Renée slowly turned her face, and Miss Bryne's manner changed. That face was easy to read; and hurrying to her niece's side, she caught the agitated girl in her arms.

'Renée, my darling, what is the matter?'

It was like the touch of the discharging rod upon a Leyden jar. One moment Renée had stood there overcharged with human electricity, a passionate, indignant woman, vibrating with the intense storm evoked by that which she had gone through; the next, the cloud had burst with its rain, and she was sobbing with an hysterical rush of tears in Miss Bryne's arms.

'Yes? No?' mused the elder lady as she caressingly tried to soothe and comfort her charge. 'Oh, this love, this love!' she said to herself. 'It must be so. The reaction that is sure to come after the self-surrender—this owing to the passion so deeply hidden in the

breast. Ah, what we poor trembling women suffer for their sake.'

'It is, yes,' mused Miss Bryne as she gently led Renée to a couch, and drew the agitated face down till it was hidden in her breast. 'He has told her, and she loves him; but the poor heart rebels still against its master. Ah, so like—so like. But it is nature, I suppose; and throughout nature is so cruel, even the gentle birds can peck. Oh, how well I know.'

'Renée, dearest,' she whispered, 'what is it?'

There was no reply.

'Can you not confide in me, my own?'

Still no reply, but Renée's arms tightened about her aunt's neck.

'That is right, dear. I know your brave little heart feels crushed, and you cannot trust yourself to speak. But let me help you, dearest. It will do you good, I know: I could not help seeing what he meant by bringing those flowers and asking me to go.'

Renée raised her head with her face now flushed and her eyes flashing.

'Did Brant ask you to go, aunt?'

'Yes, dearest.—But don't, pray, don't look at me like that.'

'How could you, aunt! How could you!' cried Renée, shrinking away in her indignation.

'My darling, I did it for the best; and I thought perhaps that—that—though you might think like this, you would thank me afterwards.'

'Oh aunt! shame!' cried Renée angrily.

'Don't speak to me like that, dearest,' pleaded Miss Bryne. 'But tell me: Brant did come to propose to you?'

'Yes: my cousin!'

'Well, yes, dear, the relationship is near; but then we have precedent amongst people in the highest ranks of society. And besides, love, dear Brant is like myself, related in the second degree. Really, dearest, I do not think you need raise that as an obstacle. Of course it was quite right to name it at first.'

Renée's weakness had passed away, and she looked at her aunt with an air of perplexity mingled with contempt and indignation, which increased when Miss Bryne drew her closer once more and kissed her tenderly.

'You are agitated now, dearest,' whispered Miss Bryne, 'and it is only natural, my love. Ah Renée, my child, I have suffered too. But you might confide in me, dear. It would make me so happy to feel that I was everything to you, and I know, darling, it would comfort this brave little throbbing heart.'

'Aunt, I have nothing to confide more than you know,' said Renée coldly.

'My darling!' said Miss Bryne reproachfully.

'Well, what do you wish me to say? I have always thought of Brant as my brother. He took me by surprise, and I felt that it was dreadful.'

'Yes, dear, at first. It is how a woman should feel. But afterwards?'

'Afterwards, I made him passionately angry, and he left me after saying the cruellest things.'

'But you had relented first, dear?'
'Relented? Oh aunt, this is too dreadful.
How can you be so weak?'

'Because I am a suffering woman, my child, and we are all alike. I could confide in you, dearest, and I should like you to confide in me. But there; I know what it is. One feels the pain, the agony of it all; but, *Rénée*, dearest, we should not quite believe in our hearts: they are liable to deceive us, and to prompt us to say things which may cause us to repent for years.—No, no; don't try to leave me, dear. I want to sympathise with you as I can. You know once, dear—ah, so many years ago! there was some one who never would have proposed to me; but if he had, I know then that I should have indignantly refused him, and then relented ever after. Come, try and believe in me, and make me the receptacle of all your thoughts, love; and think, I beg of you, for the sake of your father's happiness, don't be too ready to treat all that has passed as final. You may see later on that it was to be, only you checked the current of two loving hearts. If Brant loves you, as I think he does, ought you to blast his hopes?'

'Aunt, dear, I cannot bear this. Please, say no more. There; I must—I must go.'

'Yes, dear, you shall. I know solitude is so great a comfort at such times. But so is sympathy, dearest—a woman's sympathy, especially of one who is perhaps as weak as yourself. You want it now, if ever.'

'Yes,' thought *Rénée* in the solitude of her own room, 'I want it now, if ever. Poor aunt! And yet she loves me very dearly, in her way.'

GINSENG.

THE most prized drug in the entire Chinese pharmacopœia—that medley of fearful and wonderful things—is the famous Ginseng, the root of a plant belonging to the Ivy tribe, which has for centuries been regarded as a very elixir of life, and supposed to be endowed with almost miraculous properties. While of prime importance in China and Japan, its use is by no means confined to these countries. It is the principal tonic used in Central Asia, and in Oriental countries generally, and indeed was at one time introduced into Europe, where it met with some favour, until sarsaparilla supplanted it in popularity.

So great is the demand for ginseng in China, that the finest kinds command enormous prices; the drug, according to quality, selling at from six dollars to four hundred dollars an ounce. Doubtless, its dearness contributes largely, with such a people as the Chinese, to raise its celebrity so high. The rich and the mandarins probably use it mainly out of pure ostentation, as its cost puts it beyond the reach of the common people. To meet the wants of the poorer classes, many other roots are substituted, the most important of which is American ginseng, the product of an allied species, which is largely im-

ported from the United States. This American ginseng is said to be much used in the domestic medicine of the States to the west of the Alleghanies; but it is regarded by regular medical practitioners as quite worthless.

Notwithstanding the firm belief which the Chinese have in the extraordinary powers of the genuine native root, Europeans have hitherto failed to find any remarkable properties in it, and it has no active principle and no medicinal action. Like the mandrake, which was accounted so potent in former days, it no doubt derives its virtues largely from the faith of the patient. Dr Porter Smith, however, mentions having seen some cases in which life appeared to have been prolonged for a time by its use. M. Maack states that a Cossack of his party, having accidentally chopped off a finger with an axe, applied an ointment made of ginseng to the wound, which healed rapidly. The Chinese believe it to be a sovereign remedy for almost all diseases, and more particularly for exhaustion of body or mind. M. Huc says that 'they report marvels of its curative powers, and no doubt it is for Chinese organisations a tonic of very great effect for old and weak persons; but its nature is too heating, the Chinese physicians admit, for the European temperament, already, in their opinion, too hot.'

At one time the ginseng grown in Manchuria was considered to be the finest, and it became so scarce in consequence, that an Imperial edict was issued prohibiting its collection. All the supplies of the drug collected in the Chinese Empire are Imperial property, and are sold to those allowed to deal in it at its weight in gold. The ginseng obtained in Corea is now accounted most valuable. The root of the wild plant is preferred to that of the cultivated, and the quality of the drug is supposed to improve with the age of the plant. The export from Corea is a strict monopoly, the punishment for smuggling it out being death. The total export is only about twenty-seven thousand pounds annually; but owing to its great value, even this small quantity yields a considerable revenue, which is said to be the king's personal perquisite. Ginseng is also grown in Japan, where it was introduced from Corea, but as there the plant grows much more luxuriantly than in its native country, the root is considered less active, and is not so much esteemed.

Though the product of the wild ginseng is most valued, the plant is carefully cultivated in some parts of Corea. It is raised from seed which is sown in March. The seedlings are transplanted frequently during the first two or three years, and great care is taken to shade them from the sun and rain. Healthy plants mature in about four years, but the roots are not usually taken up until the sixth season. Ordinary ginseng is prepared by simply drying the root in the sun or over a charcoal fire. To make red or clarified ginseng, the root is placed in wicker baskets, which are put in a large earthenware vessel with a closely fitting cover, and pierced in the bottom with holes. The whole is then set over boiling water and steamed for about four hours. The ginseng is

afterwards dried until it assumes a hard resinous, translucent appearance, which is a proof of its good quality. That of the best quality is generally sold in hard, rather brittle, translucent pieces, about the size of the little finger, and from two to four inches in length. Its taste is mucilaginous, sweetish, and slightly bitter and aromatic.

The greatest care is taken of the pieces of the finest quality. M. Huc says that throughout China no chemist's shop is unprovided with more or less of it. According to the account given by Lockhart (*Medical Missionary in China*) of a visit to a ginseng merchant, it is stored in small boxes lined with sheet-lead, which are kept in larger boxes containing quicklime for absorbing moisture. The pieces of the precious drug are further enclosed in silk wrappers and kept in little silk-lined boxes. The merchant, when showing a piece bared of its wrappings to Mr Lockhart for his inspection, requested him not to breathe on or handle it, while he dilated on its merits, and related the marvellous cures he had known it to effect. The root is covered, according to quality, with the finest embroidered silk, plain cotton cloth, or paper.

In China, ginseng is often sent to friends as a valuable present, and in such cases there is usually presented along with the drug a small finely finished double kettle for its preparation. The inner kettle is made of silver, and between it and the outside copper vessel is a small space for holding water. The silver kettle fits in a ring near the top of the outer covering, and is furnished with a cup-like cover, in which rice is put, with a little water. The ginseng is placed in the inner vessel, the cover put on, and the whole apparatus set on the fire. When the rice in the cover is cooked, the medicine is ready, and is eaten by the patient, who drinks the ginseng tea at the same time.

The dose of the root is from sixty to ninety grains. During the use of the drug, tea-drinking is prohibited for at least a month, without any other change of diet. It is taken in the morning before breakfast, and sometimes in the evening before going to bed.

In India, Persia, and Afghanistan, ginseng is known as *chob-chini*, the 'Chinese wood.' In these countries it is prepared either as a powder, which is compounded of ginseng, with gum-mastic and sugar-candy, equal parts of each, about a drachm being taken once a day, early in the morning; or as a decoction, in the preparation of which an ounce of fine parings is boiled for a quarter of an hour in a pint of water. There are two ways in which the tonic is taken. The first is a truly Oriental luxurious method, affected by wealthy people, and especially by Afghan princes. The patient retires to a garden, where his senses are soothed by listening to music, the song of birds, and the bubbling of a flowing stream, and enjoying the balmy breeze. He avoids everything likely to trouble and annoy him, and will not even open a letter lest it should contain bad news; and the doctor forbids any one to contradict him. Some grandees of Central Asia go through a course of forty days of this pleasant regimen every second year. The other and

more commonplace method of taking ginseng requires no other precautions than the avoiding of acids, salt, and pepper, and choosing summertime, as cold is supposed to cause rheumatism.

AN UNAUTHORISED INTERVENTION.*

CHAPTER II.

INSTINCTIVELY, in his utter amazement, Jack advanced a step. At a sign from the colonel, who had evidently mistaken his meaning, half-a-dozen revolvers were pointed at his head.

'Resistance is useless, señor,' said the officer. 'The house is surrounded—and the soldiers have their orders. Surely Don Juan, after his long absence, isn't already tired of his native country? It would be a pity if he were to share the fate of his distinguished father—just yet.'

His tone was not very pleasant; but of course Jack had not the same reason to resent it as the real Juan Tovar might have had, any more than he had the inclination to resent the laugh with which the words were received. He confronted the colonel quite calmly: the instant's thought had shown him the position—and its possibilities.

'I am sorry to disappoint you, Señor Coronel,' he said, very slowly; 'but might it not be as well to make sure, first of all, that you have the right man?'

The colonel threw out his palms in a significant gesture.

'Because, in the other case,' Jack went on, unheeding, 'it may prove very uncomfortable for the Señor Coronel and his Government if they detain a British subject without reasonable cause, and without reasonable inquiry. That, of course,' he added, 'is a matter for the Señor Coronel. I am powerless.'

'Ca! I am glad Don Juan recognises the facts—for his own sake.' He resumed his tone of irony. 'And so you are a British subject now, señor? I was aware of your residence in England for a year or two, but not that it absolved you from the risks of meddling with the affairs of San Estevan.'

'I have nothing more to say,' replied Jack, 'except this: I have already given your subordinates all particulars of myself; the *Idaho* is still at anchor, and you may easily satisfy yourself of their truth; and if not, I shall hold myself free to take such steps as I may think proper to get reparation for this outrage. You have heard my protest, Señor Coronel. The rest is for yourself.'

Then he lit a cigar carelessly, by way of hinting that he had no further interest in the proceedings. The onlookers exchanged glances: they seemed struck by his attitude of indifference. But the colonel, who was an obstinate man by nature, and incapable of more than one idea at a time, smiled blandly in the consciousness of his superior prescience.

'Oh! it is good acting,' he remarked. 'But

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Don Juan does not flatter our intelligence. We expected him; we did not expect (even we) that he would land at Sampacho labelled with his name and object, or without a story. When he left Valparaiso on the 14th— He paused for a contradiction.

Jack calmly blew out his match. 'We seem to be losing time,' he said.

'Then you surrender to the charge, señor?'

'Pardon me: I submit to force. You have my warning of the probable consequences.' And seeing no alternative, he handed over his revolver as he spoke.

'Don Juan is wise,' replied the colonel, accepting the weapon. 'You have no other arms on your person? Very good!—For myself, I am quite ready to take the responsibility for my action, either now or when the British Government chooses to interfere.'

'Now that we understand each other, I am at your service. May I ask what you intend to do with me?'

'Pray, assure yourself, señor. On my part, nothing very terrible,' said the officer, unbending under the obvious delusion that his prisoner had thrown up his hand. 'I shall only have the honour to conduct you to-morrow to the city of San Estevan. My own duty ends when I deliver you to the military Governor: it is for him, under the instructions of His Excellency the President, to deal with serious cases of rebellion—such as this.'

'And in the meantime?'

'I am afraid you must spend the night in close custody. Believe me, however, that we shall do our utmost to make your visit to the republic—which,' said he, with grim humour, 'may not be a long one—as comfortable as we can.'

With that he turned to give some instructions to his subordinates, and for a minute Jack was left to his own thoughts. These, one must admit, were scarcely so desponding as they should have been. Indeed, he smiled to himself as he pictured the look on Sir Ralph Petre's face if that worthy diplomatist were to see him in his present plight, held prisoner as a dangerous rebel within ten minutes of his landing, and now watched over in every movement by a dozen pairs of keen and suspicious eyes!

His pleasant musings were broken by the colonel's voice. 'Now, Don Juan,' he said.

'I am ready, Señor Coronel,' he answered.

'But, first, there is one favour that I must beg of you.'

The colonel bowed. 'If it is within my power—'

'I have simply to ask you to address me, while we are together, by the name I have given. It isn't a matter of much importance, perhaps; but I have no wish to pose, even for a day or two, as a man whom I have never seen.'

'Oh! as you please,' said the other, laughing carelessly.

He signed to his officers, and preceded Jack to the door. Outside, the street was occupied by an imposing array of soldiers under arms, and beyond them the presence of the curious villagers was dimly to be discerned in the

shadow of the houses. Jack took his place by the colonel's side; the troops closed round; and, at the word of command, the party moved off in dead silence through the line of tumble-down huts. It was a novel experience to the Englishman, and in his state of mind not altogether an unpleasant one, to feel himself the central figure of all this hubbub. For once in his life, at least, he was a personage of some importance. The sensation was still fresh when they drew up presently before a low, white-washed building, and the information was vouchsafed to him that he had reached his lodging for the night. The larger portion of his guard was told off for various duties around and about the house; and, surrounded by the rest, he was conducted through a vile *patio*—which seemed to be used chiefly for stabling purposes—to an equally vile chamber, furnished only with a pallet and a couple of chairs, and far from clean. Here he had a last tussle with the Commandante. Learning that he was expected, for precaution's sake, to share the little room with two soldiers, he objected in the strongest terms. They could post half-a-dozen outside his door, and another half-dozen at the window, and as many around the place as they chose; but he insisted so energetically upon privacy within it, that at last the officer gave in. Then he wished his prisoner 'Buenas noches,' and withdrew with his men.

Left to his meditations, Jack threw himself upon the pallet and indulged in a hearty bout of laughter. At the moment, it was the ludicrous side of the position that struck him most of all. He did not blame his captors overmuch. Evidently they had some ground to expect the arrival of the redoubtable Juan Tovar; he was not surprised, after what he had heard on board the *Idaho*, to find how much they feared him; and, for all that he knew to the contrary, they might be as much alike as twin-brothers. He amused himself with the fancy of the Señor Coronel's disappointment when the mistake was discovered, and hugged the anticipation of his own part in the scene. And in the meantime? Well, he felt no inclination to hurry on the crisis; the adventure pleased him; and as he meant to be as comfortable as circumstances would permit, he set himself for slumber with an easy conscience. Almost the last sound that came to his ears before he fell off was the steam-whistle of the *Idaho* as she resumed her voyage northward. It mingled in his dreams all that night with the tramp-tramp of the sentinels outside his door.

Even the annoyances of the next morning did not serve to depress his spirits. His toilet was made, his breakfast eaten, under the eyes of his guards; he loitered for two hours in the *patio*, stared at by a succession of unwashed warriors. They did not grow in one's favour under the light of day: their uniforms seemed more ragged, their demeanour more villainous, their whole appearance as far removed from soldierly smartness as could well be imagined. He was relieved at half-past nine by the coming of the colonel, with the welcome news that everything was in readiness for his departure—if the señor pleased.

'The señor is only too glad,' he returned.

The scene in the village was a repetition of that of the previous evening. The most elaborate precautions had evidently been taken to ensure his safe custody and prevent the possibility of a rescue. He had the usual escort; from the inn to the railway depot, not more than a thousand yards in distance, the road was lined by troops; the brown-faced villagers had been crushed back into the spaces between the huts, whence they watched the procession with curious eyes; and the little station itself was occupied by the military, to the total exclusion of the populace. By this time Jack had become rather indifferent to their presence, and glanced with more interest at the train. It consisted, first, of a fairly-powerful engine, badly in need of some paint; a carriage of four compartments, which had probably been condemned as antiquated by the most backward railway company in England ten years before; five or six open wagons, in one of which a crowd of natives with market baskets was huddled, having apparently been evicted from their legitimate places; and, lastly, the conductor's van. Everywhere there were soldiers—in three of the four compartments, in the van, even on the engine. If this were on his account alone, then indeed were the authorities in a nervous state.

The second compartment was empty: the colonel motioned him to take his seat in it.

'After you, señor,' said he, stepping aside.

'My thanks—no! My place is on the engine.'

Jack stared at him. 'On the engine! But that will be a little uncomfortable, won't it?' he suggested.

'Doubtless,' said the other, with a shrug of his shoulders. 'It is only a matter of precaution.'

'But surely you don't fear a rescue, Señor Coronel?'

'Oh! it is always as well to be prepared for one,' was the reply. 'And now, if I may trouble you'—

Jack stepped in without another word, and was followed by four under-officers. Just then his thoughts were too busy with this new development to notice that they showed their revolvers very ostentatiously. What if the colonel's fears were realised? He recollected the English-speaking Indian, and for the first time saw the full significance of the incident. If he, too, had mistaken him for Tovar, he could not gainsay the possibility of a rescue being attempted. And in that event? It sounded very well and very romantic in theory: it was not unlikely to be somewhat unpleasant for him in solid reality. And a slight shiver ran through him as his eyes fell on his companions' revolvers.

He was still in his reverie when the train started on its way across the broad stretch of jungle which intervenes between the seaboard and the foot-hills. It was the beginning of a long and tedious journey. From Sampacho to the capital it is little more than forty miles; but of that nearly the half is a steady climb across the great mountain-range of San Estevan, beyond which the city lies; and this upward trip, according to one of the officers, was never done in less than seven hours. Then the day

was uncomfortably hot; his guards were not inclined to be sociable; and to a man wedged in the middle of a railway carriage, while the train crawls along at seven or eight miles an hour, the best scenery loses its attraction—although Jack, to be honest, did not trouble himself much with scenery under the best of circumstances. For one thing, however, he had the opportunity of deciding his plan of campaign without interruption. Barring the undesirable chance of a rescue, he felt little dread of the upshot. If the worst came to the worst, he had always the British Consul at San Estevan, Mr Chalmers, upon whom to fall back. He knew Chalmers well, having met him frequently at Salvatierra; but for divers reasons, not unconnected with Sir Ralph Petre, he did not wish to trouble him unless in the last resort, and of that he had no fear. Sooner or later, the discovery of his identity must be made; there was sure to be somebody in the capital who knew young Tovar. Meanwhile, he concluded, it was no business of his to help a tottering Government. All his sympathies were with the other side; and if by doing nothing he could confirm his captors in their mistake without compromising himself, and thus perhaps render the rebels some assistance—why, it was no more than the authorities deserved. He mapped out his course of action accordingly. It was one that might entail some discomfort, but of that he thought nothing: it was an experience in the present, and for the future it would at least be something worth telling in the smoking-room of his club.

The day passed slowly and without incident. Before long the train was toiling painfully through the mountain-passes, now ascending successive plateaux by gentle gradients, now skirting the edge of a picturesque ravine; the vegetation began to lose its distinctive tropical character, to approach more nearly to that of Europe; and, after the sultry heat of the coast-region, the freshness of the hill-air was delightful. Even here the colonel did not relax his precautions. At every little station at which they stopped—although scarcely a native was ever to be seen, save one or two who left or joined the party in the wagon behind—a number of soldiers descended and patrolled the line on both sides until they were ready to start again.

It was not until late in the afternoon that the monotony was broken. They had climbed the three thousand feet to the great plain of San Estevan; the mountains were behind them at last; and, as they drew up at a wayside station, Jack learned with relief that they had now a level run of barely ten miles to the capital. Then he chanced to glance out of the window. The station stood in the middle of an orange grove, the trees coming right up to the barriers; and through these, at this moment, several of his Indian fellow-travellers—they of the wagon—were passing between a file of the military. Jack started as he noticed the last one, who had halted for an instant to address a soldier. He saw only the man's profile, but it was enough: he could have sworn to it anywhere as that of his English-speaking acquaintance of the previous evening. Suddenly there

was a commotion. The soldier seemed to hustle the Indian; quick as a flash, the latter turned upon him, struck him heavily in the face, and sent him reeling amongst his comrades; then, in a couple of bounds, he sought refuge in the orange grove; and, wheeling for a second before he disappeared behind the trees, he shook his fist and shouted: 'Viva Tovar! Viva la Libertad!'

Immediately all was confusion. The soldiers rushed to the barriers; a few shots were fired; the hotter spirits, without waiting for the order, started in chase; the colonel ran up hot-foot, commanding and gesticulating. This Jack saw, and no more. He had risen in his excitement; and now he was roughly pressed back into his seat by his guards, and, with four revolvers staring him in the face, persuaded to remain there. But the issue of the episode was soon apparent. The colonel had evidently chosen the wiser part; for in another minute the train was again in motion, and did not stop until it reached the terminus at San Estevan. Here there were more soldiers, information of the capture having doubtless been sent on by telegraph; and as Jack descended at the invitation of the colonel, who looked none the better for his ride on the engine, an officer came forward to meet them.

'Is this the man, Señor Coronel?' he asked, saluting.

'Yes.'

'Then everything is ready for his reception. The Governor would like to examine him at once.'

So the critical moment was at hand! They passed outside, where a two-horse carriage was in waiting, surrounded—Jack was pleased to see—by a half-troop of cavalry. Beyond, a small crowd of loafers had gathered. There was no demonstration; he was hustled into the conveyance, followed by the colonel and another; the soldiers closed round; and off they went at full speed through one badly-paved street after another, each lined in sombre uniformity with one-storeyed, flat-roofed houses. The shaking and jolting were terrible, for the carriage seemed innocent of springs; but the journey was short, and in five minutes they dashed into the Plaza, and drew up before a large building on the farther side. Five o'clock was just striking on a neighbouring clock; and through the window of the coach the prisoner observed that more troops were manœuvring in the square, and that cannon were placed to command the approaches. He had a vague wonder if all the inhabitants of San Estevan were soldiers. Since his landing, he had seen few who were not.

Now, with half-a-dozen around him, he was conducted into the courtyard of the building; and there the colonel left him to kick his heels, and be stared at by those going out and in. For twenty minutes he awaited the Governor's pleasure, and then he was summoned into his presence—he and his escort. Presently he found himself in a large room, a soldier on either side, the others at the door. Behind a table, on which lay his gun-case and the contents of his bag, three men were seated—one of them the colonel; another, a youngish, sharp-faced

man in uniform; and the third, an older man in civilian's dress. He learned afterwards that the officer was General Ferreira, military Governor of the city; and his companion, Señor Elias, the President's chief secretary.

The two looked him over, somewhat insolently. Then Ferreira nodded.

'There is no doubt, Elias,' said he.

'No—I suppose not,' replied Elias, after another scrutiny. 'Still, he does not resemble his father so much as he promised ten years ago. He was only a boy then, of course.'

'Oh! they always change.' He turned to the soldiers. 'Search him!' he cried sharply.

Jack was taken by surprise, and before he recovered, the men had laid down their arms and gripped him. But he resisted instinctively, with all his strength, protesting with every muscle against the outrage. He was no weakling, and the guards soon discovered that they had their work cut out for them. For a minute Ferreira watched the struggle, smiling. Then, at a signal from him, the other soldiers advanced to their comrades' aid: Jack was thrown to the floor; and in a minute more, notwithstanding his efforts, the Governor's purpose had been accomplished. After all, it was fruitless. The only document found in his possession was a letter of credit upon a San Francisco banker, payable to John Thorold.

Jack rose to his feet. Hot with righteous indignation as he was, he saw his opportunity, and waited patiently until Ferreira and his colleagues had studied the paper.

'Well, Señor Tovar?' asked the general, looking up.

'I am waiting for your apology,' he said. 'You will find my name, and the proof of your mistake, in that paper.'

'Indeed?' said Ferreira, sneering. 'An apology?'

'Let me assure you, señor, that you will have to give it sooner or later,' he returned. 'That is quite certain; meanwhile, you will excuse me if I refuse to hold any communication with you until you have done so.'

'So you still deny your identity? I am afraid I must convince Señor Tovar'—this, nevertheless, with a side-glance at Elias. 'The document? Oh! we shall come to that presently. The apology, too—it also must wait a little.'

Jack folded his hands behind him. 'Very well,' he said: 'you understand, señor, that I have nothing whatever to say to you—and, for the rest, I am in your hands.'

'Let us begin at the beginning, then,' the general went on, unheeding his interruption.

'It is now about three months since you took up your residence in Valparaiso, where we happen to have a trusty agent. This is his report'—picking out a paper from the mass before him. '“About five feet ten inches in height, black hair, dark eyes, heavy dark moustache, is twenty-six years old, but looks thirty, speaks English well—will probably attempt to pass for an Englishman or American.” He was right, you see. And the description—is it not good?'

Jack could not deny it, even to them: it fitted him well enough, although it was suffi-

ciently general to fit thousands of young men. But, true to his plan, he said nothing.

'Well, your preparations did not escape our agent,' continued Ferreira. 'The three months passed. Then, four days ago, we received a telegram warning us that you had left on the 14th on board the *Idaho* steamer, presumably bound for Sompacho. The *Idaho* arrived last evening: you were the only passenger to land.' He paused, as if this put the matter beyond doubt, but resumed as the prisoner still kept silence: 'On the wharf, you are met by an accomplice, with whom you have a whispered consultation. You are about to follow him, but the soldiers prevent the movement just in time.' He broke off, and turned to the colonel: 'By the way, what became of the accomplice?'

'He escaped in the confusion of the moment, general—we were more anxious to secure Señor Tovar.'

'He has not been seen since?'

'No.'

Jack smiled to himself, both because he could have told them differently—and for another reason.

'Is that enough?' asked Ferreira. 'If not—well, here are your clothes, your gun, all marked with the initials of your name. The English name also? Pah! It is to be supposed that even a fool, far less a clever man like Don Juan Tovar, would provide himself with an English name which corresponded with his initials, and even with a banker's letter in that name!—But enough of this!' said he, rising impatiently.—'Señor Elias, I presume that you are satisfied?'

Elias bowed.

'And you, Señor Coronel?'

'Quite!' replied the colonel.

Ferreira turned again to Jack. 'Then, Juan Tovar, I have to inform you that you will be held in strict confinement for the present, until I can report to His Excellency the President at the seat of war—and then, to-morrow or next day,' he added, in his former tone, 'I hope to make my apology to you in the Plaza, with a company of soldiers to witness it!'

Jack's answer was a broad smile, which meant very plainly that the general could do as he pleased. For, now that the conversation had given him the clue to the whole mystery, the threat had no terrors for him.

'Meanwhile, if you have nothing to say'—

'Nothing—except that I am very hungry, and should be glad of some dinner,' he said quietly.

Ferreira looked at him with more approval than he had yet shown, and also with some perplexity: he could appreciate his coolness, even if he could not quite understand it. But, before he had time to reply, a new sound came to his ears, startling him and the others into immediate attention: the sound of distant firing. For a minute or two they listened, speaking not a word, and then an officer flung himself unceremoniously into the room: 'General, the town has risen!'

Ferreira silenced the man with a quick gesture, and drew him aside. And Jack, straining his ears, overheard these snatches from the whispered communication: 'News has spread—

Tovar—armed mob—fired on soldiers!—and overheard, too, the peremptory command of the general: 'You have the order: clear the streets at once, and at whatever cost!'

AN OLD ENGLISH TOPOGRAPHER.

WHEN Thomas Baskerville, in 1678, rode at his own sweet will from one English town to another, he never dreamed the record of his journeyings would, two centuries later, rank among historical documents, and, as such, be given to the world at the public expense.

Holding inns to be the chief things about which the well-provided traveller has to concern himself, Baskerville is careful to set down those at which he stayed, the sort of entertainment they provided, with a word or two about the landlord or landlady. An inn exactly to his liking was the 'Black Swan' at Hereford, kept by an honest, ingenious gentleman, whose spouse was a distiller of incomparable strong waters; for at this hostelry was to be had a morning draught of two, three, four, or five year old beer, or brave red-streak cider, a beverage brought to such perfection by our traveller's own uncle, Lord Scudamore, that the Prince of Tuscany, imbibing it at Oxford, dubbed it 'Vin de Scudamore.' In the course of his wanderings, Baskerville came across several 'gentle' and 'genteel' hosts and hostesses, but missed seeing the landlord of the best inn in 'Chetnam,' by reason of that gentleman having just been hanged for making money by coining it. Belated one December night in Gloucestershire, Baskerville and half-a-dozen companions stumbled upon an inn at Withington, at which they found a conscionable landlord and landlady, 'for, being seven men and horses, we had good fires, excellent ale, of which we drank very freely, a good dish of steaks or fried beef, a dish of birds we had killed, well roasted, strong water, and for breakfast, bread and cheese and cold meats' tongues well boiled, hay, and each horse his peck of oats; and all this for seventeen shillings.'

The liquors in vogue in Charles II.'s days were canary at two shillings, sherry at twenty pence, claret 'as good as in London' at a shilling a bottle, sack at half-a-crown a quart, strong waters, ale, beer, cider, and mum. At York, Baskerville found his host's strong, sluggish ale so little to his liking, that he betook himself to a barber's house and regaled himself with 'China ale' at sixpence a quart. He was puzzled by the barber asking if he would bite—an inquiry explained by that worthy saying anybody who had a mind to drink at his house was welcome to roast beef and such-like victuals for nothing. At an inn between Skipton and Leeds the same hospitality was displayed, showing that the free lunch is by no means an American invention.

The inns of Northampton might be 'such gallant and stately structures the like is scarcely elsewhere to be seen;' but for a sumptuous signpost, the 'Scole Inn,' near St Edmundsbury, bore away the bell. It is thus described: 'The signpost, having most of the effigies cut in full proportion, is contrived with these poetical

fancies for supporters to the post. On the further side of the way there is Cerberus or a large dog with three heads on one side; and Charon with a boat rowing an old woman with a letter in her hand, on the other side. The other figures are Saturn, with a child in his arms, eating it up; Diana, with a crescent moon on her head; Actæon, with his hounds eating him, and the effigies of his huntsmen. Here also are cut in wood the effigies of Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude; Neptune, the sea-god, with his sceptre or trident; and for a weathercock, a man taking the altitude with a quadrant. Moreover, this signpost is adorned with two figures of lions, two of harts, the one painted on a board, the other cut in wood in full proportion of it; ten escutcheons; two figures of angels; Bacchus, the god of wine; and a whale's head spewing up Jonas; with other figures and flourishes.' Truly, thirsty wayfarers could scarcely miss finding the 'Scole Inn.'

Considerations of space forbid the attempting to summarise what Baskerville has to say of the many towns he halted at; but it may be noted that Leicester is stigmatised as a stinking old town on a dull river, Newmarket dismissed as a poor thoroughfare town, environed with a rare downy open country, having nothing remarkable save the king's house, lately built for his use when coming there for hunting or racing; York is pronounced to need a purgation of fire if it desire to emulate the beauty of London and Northampton; while Nottingham is extolled as a paradise restored, 'for here you find large streets, fair-built houses, fine women, and many coaches rattling about, and their shops full of merchantable riches. The town is situated upon a pleasant rock of freestone, in which every one may have cellars, and that without the trouble of springs or moisture, so that, excepting Bridgnorth in Shropshire, you cannot find such another town in England. It is divided into the upper and lower towns; for when you have a mind to leave the more spacious parts on the plain of the hill, and will go down to the lower streets by the river, you must descend down right many stairs ere you get to the bottom; and here you find another town full of shops and people, who have a convenience to cut in the rock warehouses, stables, or what rooms else they please for their peculiar uses.'

Oxonian as he was, Baskerville could not but admire Cambridge with its fourteen churches, and its colleges of St John's, Trinity, Clare, King's, and Trinity Hall, having fair bridges over the river, leading to delicate bowling-greens and fine gardens; but the black dirty streets eclipsed the splendour of the buildings, and for situation, air, and magnificent architecture Cambridge could not compare with his own Alma Mater; although the Cantabs had a better fashion for undergraduates' caps to keep off the sun, and the tufts of the masters' caps were four or five inches long. In the fields a mile beyond Cambridge, the greatest fair in England was held every September. Here, at fair time, were to be seen large streets and shops full of all the varieties of wares to be found in London itself, besides quantities of

wool and iron, heaps of salt-fish, carts laden with oysters, while the river was thick-set with provision-laden boats. 'The concourse of this fair,' says our tourist, 'must doubtless contribute very great riches to Cambridge; and the farmers of Stourbridge fields are also enriched by it, for, besides the great rates that are given where shops and victualling houses do stand, the soil is greatly enriched with oyster-shells and other muck.'

In the river by Chatham, Baskerville beheld thirty stout war-ships riding; and at Gillingham went aboard the pride of the royal navy, the *Royal Sovereign*, requiring a crew of seven hundred men when on service. 'She carries,' says he, 'between eighty and a hundred guns. The gunrooms—for she hath three decks and two gunrooms, one under another—are about sixty paces long. Her stern and quarters are curiously carved and painted with imagery work in poetical fancies, and richly overlaid with gold. In the lantern that is erected in the midst of the stern, I stood upright. The king's cabin is richly painted and gilded; and so is the great cabin.'

Two hundred years ago, Beccles in Suffolk—thanks to being blessed or otherwise with an abundance of common land—was ruled by the 'Grass Stewards,' and had more than its fair share of poor folk; 'for customs permitting them if able to rent a house of so much per annum, to enjoy the profits of the common, so, when their stock fails them, they come to the parish's charge.'

Doncaster then prided itself upon its coloured stockings for horsemen's wear, in the vending of which the women went from inn to inn, following travellers even into their chambers, and taking no denial. The women of Harrogate (Harrogate) were equally bent upon business, bringing water from the wells to travellers at their lodgings.

When Charles II. ruled the land, all strangers entering Southampton had to satisfy the authorities as to whom they were, whence they came, and what they wanted there. Stone was so scarce Gravesend way, that the names of the occupiers of churchyard ground were inscribed on logs of wood, fastened to posts at each end of the grave; and for want of better fuel, the people of Wilts used cow-dung, which they dried in summer by daubing it against their houses and walls. Norwich butchers were compelled to sell all meat killed in the fore-part of the week by Thursday night, in order to encourage the sale of fish on the following days. A pleasanter peculiarity of the place was the annual feast of the mayor, aldermen, and liverymen, kept in the town-hall, whereunto ladies were invited and presented with march-panes to take home with them. With like gallantry the trade-companies of Newbury allowed the sex to participate in the merry meetings they delighted in holding, on which occasions the men, arrayed in their best clothes, marched through the town with the town music playing before them, the women following after, finely dressed and all in steeple-crowned hats, 'a pleasant sight to behold.'

Another pleasant sight to Baskerville's eyes was a strange bird that fell a victim to the

gun of one of his companions at Hosbury Bridge, near Gloucester. This ornithological curiosity was nearly as big as a wind-thrush; the head, resembling that of a bullfinch, bore a fine tuft of feathers of a cinnamon colour; the feathers of the neck, breast, and part of the wings, being something darker. The upper part of the tail was ash-coloured, with a ring of black; the extreme part of the tail feathers bearing another ring of flame or gold colour. Upon the 'prime flying feathers of the wings,' mostly black, were white spots 'answerable to each other;' while nine of the largest feathers were tipped with white and lemon, the seven lesser ones being tipped white, and having ends of a brilliant vermilion hue—a *rara avis* indeed.

At the end of the notes of a journey in 1681, we find enumerated all the highest reputed commodities of the period, the English items running as follows: Herefordshire cider, Derby ale, Cheddar cheese, Pumfret (Pontefract) liquorice, Tewkesbury mustard balls (to be dissolved in vinegar or verjuice), Banbury cakes, Witney blankets, Norwich stuffs, Colchester baize, Shropshire coal, Beamdown samphire, Saffron-Walden saffron, Burford saddles, St Albans straw tankards and pots, Dunstable straw hats and Dunstable larks, Studley carrots, Besselsleigh (near Abingdon) turnips, Stroud water-reeds, Windsor Forest turf, Glastonbury peat, Hol barley broth, Lancashire lasses, Warfleet oysters; Yarmouth, Lowestoft, and Norfolk herrings; Thames sprats, Severn salmon, Dorset 'base,' Avon Salisbury graylings, Minihend mussels, Ock eels, Gloucester lampreys, Newbury crawfish, Cornish and Devonshire pilchards, Pembroke new-found-out anchovies, made of young shad, and

Arundel mullets, as they say here,
Are the best in England for good cheer,
But at sixpence the pound are pretty dear.

And we are furthermore told of

Dorsetshire ewes for early lambs,
And Warwickshire breeds most excellent rams,

and assured that 'Hampshire honey is current goods for every one's money.'

MY FIRST SHIPWRECK.

By R. C. DOWIE.

THE island of Newfoundland, which has lately achieved an unenviable prominence in the public press owing to the failure of its banks, and consequent serious financial difficulties, is chiefly famous for its abundant fisheries, which seem, in spite of a great many unfair attempted methods of capture, to be practically inexhaustible. The island, however, is famous, or rather notorious, for possessing a feature of a very different nature, yet one well known to and understood by seafaring men whose lot it is to trade to and from St John's either to Great Britain eastward, or south-westward to Halifax, Nova Scotia. And that feature is the ever-present danger of shipwreck, with the odds more in favour of total loss than against it, together

with a substantial risk of death in trying to reach a shore so precipitously rocky as to fity merit, even when ice is absent, the title of 'ironbound.'

Fishing-boats, schooners, and sailing-ships are not the only wrecks; steamers of large tonnage, sometimes carrying passengers and mails in addition to much valuable freight, as well as 'tramps,' come to irretrievable disaster, and often form rich spoil for the fishing population in these regions. In fact, a large portion of the coast of Newfoundland might be dotted with crosses every few miles at irregular intervals, but clustering thickly in the vicinity of Cape Race, showing the localities where steamers have been totally or occasionally only partially wrecked, and where many lives have been sacrificed. The reasons for this are not at all far to seek. Towards the end of spring and during summer, when the ice breaks up far to the northward, the Arctic current sweeps it south in large fields, floes, or detached bergs along the coast of Newfoundland, and with the ice comes the fog.

Another factor which has often been lost sight of, but which combines with the ice and fog and rockbound coast to render disaster likely to ships in these latitudes, is a current or series of currents which set shorewards in the neighbourhood of Cape Race. In spite of Admiralty charts and books on navigation, it is very difficult to ascertain exactly the speed and direction of these currents; and inshore the problem is further complicated by the tides having to be taken into consideration. The only really safe rule is to keep the open sea, and give the coast as wide a berth as possible.

No event of any importance had occurred on the outward trip from England in the good ship —, nor on the beginning of the homeward run until after we left Halifax, Nova Scotia, for St John's, Newfoundland, a run of about five hundred and fifty nautical miles.

The second day out was inclined to be foggy, and the ship was not making her usual speed, while during the night the fog came down at intervals and lifted again. On the morning of the last day it was my duty to go on watch at eight o'clock. The engineer relieved said, 'She's been doing a good deal of half-speed; but I think you're all right now'—the telegraph then showing full speed ahead, although, as a matter of fact, shortly afterwards, owing to 'cleaning fires,' the speed was not more than three-quarters. Still, continued the second engineer, 'I would not go far from the throttle-valve.'

Things were not very comfortable below that morning. The telegraph soon rang half-speed again, then full speed for a few minutes, and then half-speed again. Shortly after nine o'clock, just when the steam showed signs of a steady rise, the telegraph again rang full speed ahead. Leaving the throttle-valve in charge of the stoker, I looked round the stoke-hold, saw the water was at the right level in the boilers, the cleaning of the fires was finished, and that things seemed generally to be shaping better. In a few minutes, however, the order came

suddenly, 'Stop,' and as I shut the throttle-valve, the thought flashed through my mind that the next order would be, 'Full speed astern.' Before the engines stopped, the telegraph rang this order sharply twice. The engines were at once reversed, and the throttle-valve opened again.

Owing to the way on the ship, and the momentum of the shaft, it was perhaps two minutes before the engines could be made to go full speed astern, during which time the second-officer had twice called down through the skylight the last order. The steamer, however, had now struck, and though rhythmically lifted with the swell of the waves, the engines were powerless to drag her off.

Five minutes after the steamer struck or ran aground, the fog lifted, and disclosed the land, with a group of fishermen in the foreground, some two hundred yards away. Fortunately, there was no sea on, only a heaving swell. This caused the ship to bump from side to side on the boulders below, gradually tearing holes in her plates from end to end along the keel. When we first struck, the four firemen and trimmers bolted up the ladder, and were never again seen below. The donkeyman and three stokers, however, who were all old hands from previous voyages, remained staunch, and were ready for any job when required. That was a difficult twenty minutes for the engine-room staff to bear, before they knew where the ship was, and were quite uncertain what would happen next. I remember logging the engine 'movements' on the slate, with a view to future eventualities; sounded, by order of the chief-engineer, the ballast tank underneath the engine-room, and on the second trial found it was rapidly filling with water.

Orders from the captain to drive her nearer inshore had little or no effect in moving the doomed vessel. In about an hour we were slowly driven from the engine-room by the incoming water, which gradually became high enough to put out the boiler fires; and the last order I recollect executing below was to 'ease' the safety-valves, though the steam had been escaping with a roar some time before. A few tools were brought up, which it was considered might be useful on deck; and it seemed a pity to leave the engine oil-kettle always so brightly burnished; so I took it away; and it came in handy to make coffee in during the night, after several boilings to rid it of its oily flavour. On reaching the deck, it appeared that many of the passengers, of whom there were about one hundred and fifty-five, and certainly all the women and children, had been safely got ashore at a landing-place about half a mile away, in the ship's own boats, manned by some of the officers, stewards, and crew.

Before this took place, our captain had offered three pounds to eight fishermen to convey a message to the nearest telegraph station, and they asked five, which he agreed to give. When the message was written, the fishermen had changed their minds, and raised their terms, asking a pound an oar. They reckoned without their host, as, on hearing this, the captain changed his mind, and said he did not require their services; the message being afterwards

sent at a much cheaper rate by a trusty member of the crew, accompanied by a fisherman as guide. The immediate business on hand was hoisting out as much of the passengers' luggage as possible before the water reached it, and some was got out in this way, until the water rose to the same level inside the ship as outside, which was about twenty-eight feet, so that she only sank some four or five feet altogether.

About this time some of the fishermen became very annoying, and even threatening, boarding the ship to see what they could pick up, and refusing to go off. After getting ashore, and later in the day, some of them said coolly this would not be a good wreck—by which they meant they would not make much out of it.

The time arrived for us to follow the passengers ashore, and here we were most fortunate in saving all our luggage and effects, including beds, which latter served very well for one night. Rowing ashore was nothing; indeed, we came back to the ship a second time. The cabins had then been pretty successfully looted, and there was little more that was worth saving.

On shore, the saloon passengers, who could well afford to pay for it, succeeded in obtaining very fair accommodation in some of the cottages of the more well-to-do fishermen.

One or two interesting facts transpired in conversation with the officers. It appears that some time before we went ashore, on heaving the lead only a depth of seven fathoms was found; and the ship's course was altered until deep water was reached. Unfortunately, the ship was not kept long enough on this course to clear Cape Race, and the strength of the current was miscalculated, tending to bring us still closer inshore.

Although once more on *terra firma*, and heartily glad to be out of an awkward predicament, our troubles were not altogether over. For some hours, stores had been steadily brought ashore in the ship's boats, a process that interested the fishermen extremely. This interest was shown by their anxiety to assist in landing and carrying the stuff ashore, though they were not so particular in taking it to its proper destination; and it was an amusing sight to see a stalwart fisherman carrying off a side of beef on his shoulder, pursued by our chief steward, to whom the freebooter explained that he had misunderstood the directions given him. Our crew, distributed among the boats, had had no proper meal since breakfast; and in order to encourage them to work well, grog had been served out in liberal fashion.

All the officers, including the purser, doctor, and engineers, had been allotted various duties; the former two, assisted by the second-engineer, doing their best in arranging accommodation—no easy task—for the shipwrecked passengers, chiefly steerage, in the fishermen's cottages.

The women and children suffered a good deal of discomfort. In the first place, there was no bread, except in the form of hard biscuits. Another great difficulty was the want of fire and cooking utensils, chiefly kettles, to boil water and make tea or coffee in. I had been placed in charge of a boat-shed roughly extemporised

as a store, and was occupied in serving out tinned meat, of which there was plenty, and tea and coffee to all who came and asked for it.

And so the afternoon wore away. Fortunately, the temperature was not cold; the season was mild September even in that inhospitable climate; and there was still a touch of August in the air, while we felt none of those winged pests, the mosquitoes.

Most of the passengers and crew had now either obtained lodgings for the night, or been assigned out-houses or boat-sheds which would have to serve on a communistic system.

The distinctive feature of this little fishing hamlet with its scattered cottages, whose name I forget, was the odour of dried fish. It was everywhere: lines of fish were ranged along the beach; and in some other places they were stacked in tiers.

We obtained for a lodging a wooden shed fairly well constructed, with a second storey, that simply reeked with the smell of dried fish. The fish almost covered the floor to a depth of two feet, and a tarpaulin was spread over it. One had to get used to the smell. Still, our night's rest was comfortable and undisturbed—at least mine was; and one heard no complaint on this score.

After breakfast, which was not a thing to be specially treasured in one's memory, left to our own devices, we three engineers went on an exploring expedition. At the outset, however, we were somewhat delayed by the news that one of Her Majesty's gunboats had arrived; and very soon a boat came off from her, and a lieutenant at the head of his men marched ashore. There was a business-like air about the blue-jackets that produced a salutary effect for the time being amongst the fishermen. By this time we were heartily tired of the harpy-like instincts of the younger members of the community, though it is but just to say that some of the elder men did not at all approve of their actions. The country was wild and desolate in appearance—a mixture of rock and heath, intersected here and there by streams; and there seemed an extraordinary absence of animal life. We heard that it was a bad year for 'partridges' (a kind of grouse), and only saw about half-a-dozen, and found a few small trout in the pools.

After our walk, the next important matter was dinner. This we got at one of the fishermen's cottages, after the inmates had been served, which was rather cool, considering it was all the ship's provisions that were consumed; however, we managed to get enough to eat. It had now been decided that the gunboat should take the saloon passengers off, and steam to St John's; while the others and crew should walk to Trepassey—said to be five or six miles away: it proved quite ten—and await another steamer, which was to call next day.

There was no choice; so, leaving our luggage, the whole company started off along a fairly good road. I have never quite understood how the women and children managed this walk, but they did, and the conclusion is that necessity is a great stimulant. After reaching Trepassey, which is rather an important

fishing village, it took about an hour to get all the people billeted successfully. We were hospitably received by the fisher folk, who seemed mostly fairly well-to-do. Trepassey is at one side of a spade-shaped bay, possessing deep water, mostly engirt with precipitous cliffs, and forms a fairly safe harbour, being land-locked on three sides.

It will always be memorable to seafarers, as it was close to here that the terrible wreck of the *Anglo-Saxon* occurred, when some two hundred and eighty people lost their lives. Some miles away from where we were could plainly be discerned the cemetery where they lie, the stones gleaming white in the sunlight amid the green turf—a sight that aroused the deepest emotions, as we thought how easily their fate might have been ours. That evening was a comfortable one for us, owing to the kindness of our hosts, and no doubt in one way our coming must have been a welcome event in the monotony of their lives.

A small steamer successfully brought us to St John's next day. Shortly afterwards, we were paid off by the Board of Trade, our pay being reckoned up to the day our ship was wrecked (as the law—a bad one for the sailor—prescribes); and after only three days' detention in St John's, we embarked on a mail steamer that had called for us; and in due course, with a fair north-westerly gale behind us, reached England. And so ended my first and, I hope, my last shipwreck. It only remains to add that the captain and those of his officers mentioned staid on the ——— a week, and by her for a month, when a westerly gale came on and completely broke her up.

WILD-FLOWERS.

On, beautiful blossoms, pure and sweet,
Agleam with dew from the country ways,
To me, at work in a city street,
You bring fair visions of bygone days—
Glad days, when I hid in a mist of green
To watch Spring's delicate buds unfold;
And all the riches I cared to glean
Were daisy silver and buttercup gold.

'Tis true you come of a lowly race,
Nursed by the sunshine, fed by the showers;
And yet you are heirs to a nameless grace
Which I fail to find in my hothouse flowers;
And you breathe on me with your honeyed lips,
Till in thought I stand on the wind-swept fells,
Where the brown bees hum o'er the ferny dips,
Or ring faint peals on the heather bells.

I close my eyes on the crowded street,
I shut my ears to the city's roar,
And am out in the open with flying feet—
Off, off to your emerald haunts once more!
But the harsh wheels grate on the stones below,
And a sparrow chirps at the murky pane,
And my bright dreams fade in an overflow
Of passionate longing and fender pain.

E. MATHESON.

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